



COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS
Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

HCR 31

RECOGNIZING 2026 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS IN HAWAII.

April 17, 2026, 3:01pm
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the Committees,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **strongly supports HCR31** which recognizes 2026 as the International Year of the Rangelands and Pastoralists in Hawaii.

Supporting rangeland stewardship and uplifting the role of ranchers means we are supporting food production, land stewardship, and the paniolo culture. Here in Hawaii, we promote legislation and programs that keep ranchers on agricultural land because of the many benefits of well-managed rangelands – fire fuel reduction, invasive species control, increased groundwater filtration, improved soil and carbon sequestration, and ultimately, the production of a high-quality protein for our community. Throughout these systems, the boots on the ground that manage them across many generations include paniolo of all ages and backgrounds. They all hold similar high-priority values – love of the land, responsibility to the animals and families they serve, and hard work.

The benefits of rangelands and ranchers are revered across the globe, as we celebrate the International Year of the Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) in 2026. We highlight the role that these systems play in food security, land stewardship, and community resilience across the world. Management may look different in different regions, but the same principles apply in caring for the land and the animals. Currently 102 countries support the IYRP. This is an opportunity to learn across regions, share challenges and successes, and uplift the next generation who seeks to contribute to utilizing livestock to manage land.



As part of the IYRP, and with support from a USDA grant, two high school students, Saige Imig and Maria Kimitch, represented Hawaii at the Society for Range Management's Annual Meeting in Monterey, CA. Maria presented "From pastures to pavement: The loss of Rangelands and agriculture." Saige presented "Tiny Pest, Tremendous Problem" about the Two-lined Spittlebug and won first place for her presentation and was voted to be President of the 2027 High School Youth Forum in Wichita Kansas. Both students gave compelling, well-prepared presentations and we're proud that they were able to represent us.

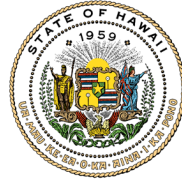
We are proud of these students for representing Hawaii so well, and ask that the legislature assist us in continuing to celebrate the positive role of rangelands by passing this resolution to recognize the International Year of the Rangelands and Pastoralists. More info can be found at <https://iyrp.info>

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Ranchers produce a high-quality protein and are the stewards of almost 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or nearly 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9560 FAX: (808) 973-9613

SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE
ARTS, AND AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2026
3:01 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 31
RECOGNIZING 2026 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND
PASTORALISTS IN HAWAII.**

Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards and Members of the Committees:

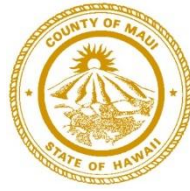
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution No. 31 that recognizes 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in Hawaii. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) supports this resolution.

The Department has long recognized the importance of Hawaii's ranchers to Hawaii's economy. Further, their sustained land management, spanning over generations, has balanced economic utilization and land stewardship practices before they even had names attached to them. The industry is organized, articulate, effective and tough when it needs to be. We look forward to collaborating with other agencies and organizations in promoting education, research, outreach, and consideration of policies related to rangeland management and conservation throughout Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this resolution.

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAI'I 96793
www.mauicounty.gov

TO: Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor
Rogerene Arce, Director of Agriculture

DATE: April 17, 2026

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HCR31, INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELAND AND PASTORALISTS**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure.

HCR31 recognizes 2026 as the International Year of Rangeland and Pastoralists in Hawaii

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

- 1. This resolution rightly recognizes a global issue that matters in Hawai'i:**
The United Nations declared 2026 the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, and Hawai'i's recognition helps bring attention to the value of these lands and the people who steward them.
- 2. Rangelands support both environmental health and local livelihoods:**
They provide ecosystem services like biodiversity protection, carbon storage, water regulation, and soil health, while pastoralists contribute food production, cultural knowledge, and long-term land stewardship.
- 3. Hawai'i should use this opportunity to strengthen support for sustainable management:**
Recognizing the year can encourage better policy, research, and outreach that help protect rangelands, restore degraded areas, and sustain ranching and pastoral communities into the future.

Mahalo for your consideration.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
and
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Friday, April 17, 2026 at 3:01 p.m.

By
Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience
And
Vassilis Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HCR 31 – RECOGNIZING 2026 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS IN HAWAII.

Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HCR 31 recognizing 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in Hawai'i, in solidarity with the United Nations.

HCR 31 encourages state agencies, the University of Hawai'i, and organizations across the State to engage in activities that promote education, research, and outreach related to rangeland management and adopt policies that will further conserve rangelands and protect the livelihoods of the State's ranchers.

The University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) recognizes the value of Hawai'i's rangelands and the ranchers that steward them. Through research and Extension initiatives CTAHR is committed to working with ranchers and private and public land management agencies to assure the ecological, economic, and cultural significance of rangelands in Hawai'i are sustained. Our faculty, through a diversity of program areas, conduct research and provide Extension outreach across many areas directly aligned with the purpose of HCR 31 to engage in activities that promote education, research, and outreach related to rangeland management. CTAHR appreciates the contributions by ranchers, pastoralists and land managers to the state economy, paniolo culture and ecological stewardship of rangelands.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HCR 31.

HCR-31

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 5:10:06 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/17/2026 3:01:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Cathy Goeggel | Testifying for Animal Rights Hawai'i | Oppose | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

The livestock industry has woven a fairytale around its insatiable demand for land to run cattle - and they appear to forget that much of those "pastures" were once forests that caught rain clouds and absorbed carbon dioxide and protected against soil erosion. I hope that our legislators will not celebrate an industry which touts itself as being good for our economy, yet frequently asks for handouts from the taxpayers. Mahalo.

LARRY JEFTS FARMS, LLC
PO BOX 27
KUNIA, HAWAII 96759
(808) 688-2892

HCR31

Recognizing 2026 As the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in Hawaii
Senate Water, Land, Culture and the Arts, and Senate Agriculture and Environment
Committee Hearing
Friday, April 17, 2026 – 3:01 PM

Testimony By: Larry Jeffs
Position: Support

Chairs Lee and Gabbard, and Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the Senate WLA/AEN Committees:

I am Larry Jeffs, owner and operator of Larry Jeffs Farms, LLC. We have more than 40 years of Hawaii farm experience on Molokai and Oahu. Our family farms grow about 1 million pounds weekly of import replacement produce. I am a volunteer director, serving as Chair of the West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). I have been an officer of the Hawaii Farm Bureau for many years.

In Hawaii, more than 1,000,000 acres are classified as rangelands. Of that, Hawaii ranchers raise livestock on over 750,000 acres and contribute more than \$50 million annually to the State's economy. Ranchers, also known as pastoralists, are stewards of these lands. As stewards, they have deep knowledge of the terrain, environment and a practical approach to managing their livestock.

Hawaii's pastoralists share a rich history and legacy with global pastoral communities, emphasizing sustainable rangeland management through technology and hard work. Rooted in and continuing the paniolo tradition, Hawaii's pastoralists merit recognition by this Legislature in alignment with the United Nations' designation of 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration of this important recognition.



April 17th, 2026

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Herbert M. “Tim” Richards, III, Vice Chair

RE: HCR 31 – RECOGNIZING 2026 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS IN HAWAII

Aloha Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the Committees,

Parker Ranch, Inc. strongly supports HCR 31 recognizing 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in Hawai‘i.

As one of Hawai‘i’s largest and longest-operating ranches, Parker Ranch understands firsthand the vital role that ranchers and pastoralists (aka Paniolo) play in stewarding working lands across our state. Ranchers collectively manage nearly 750,000 acres—approximately 20% of Hawai‘i’s total land mass—providing critical environmental, cultural, and economic benefits to our communities.

Well-managed rangelands contribute meaningfully to wildfire risk reduction, invasive species control, watershed protection, groundwater recharge, and soil health, while also supporting carbon sequestration and biodiversity. Equally important, these lands sustain the production of locally raised, high-quality protein and help advance Hawai‘i’s broader food security goals.

Ranching in Hawai‘i is deeply rooted in the traditions and values of paniolo culture. Across generations, those who work these lands share a commitment to stewardship, responsibility, and resilience. These values are not unique to Hawai‘i—they connect pastoralists around the world through shared experiences with land, livestock, and community. While management practices may vary globally, the core principles remain consistent: care for the land, care for the animals, and long-term sustainability.

The International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) provides an important opportunity to recognize and elevate these contributions on both a local and global stage. With more than 100 countries participating, this initiative highlights the essential role that rangelands play in supporting food systems, environmental stewardship, and resilient communities worldwide. It also reinforces the importance of integrating traditional knowledge with modern innovation to ensure the long-term viability of these landscapes.

In Hawai‘i, continued support for policies and programs that keep ranchers on the land is critical. Working lands are not only productive—they are protective. They represent a model of land use that balances economic viability with environmental stewardship and cultural preservation.

Parker Ranch respectfully urges the Legislature to adopt HCR 31 and formally recognize 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this measure.

Sincerely,

Jacob D. Tavares
Vice President, Business Strategy & Operations
Parker Ranch, Inc.



April 14, 2026

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Herbert M. “Tim” Richards, III, Vice Chair

RE: Support for HCR31 — Recognizing 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in Hawai‘i

Dear Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Carolyn Auwelo. I am the Owner and Manager of ‘Āina Advocates LLC, a rangeland management and ecological restoration consultation firm, and the Founder and Director of Hawaii Range Camp — the only youth environmental education program in the state focused exclusively on rangeland working landscapes. I write in strong support of HCR31.

Hawai‘i’s rangelands make up 20% of all land in the state and 86% of all agricultural land. These are not idle landscapes. They are a critical part of our local food system, producing the beef that feeds our communities and reduces our dependence on imported food. The ranchers, paniolo, and land managers who steward these lands are essential contributors to Hawai‘i’s food security and agricultural economy.

Beyond food production, well-managed rangelands deliver ecosystem services of enormous public value — protecting watersheds, recharging groundwater, sequestering carbon, and reducing wildfire risk. Rangeland managers provide these benefits at no direct cost to the public, through the daily work of caring for ‘āina. Recognizing their contributions through HCR31 affirms what those of us who work in this field know: that healthy rangelands and the people who tend them are essential to Hawai‘i’s environmental and economic resilience.

The declaration of 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists by the United Nations is a timely opportunity for Hawai‘i to align itself with a global movement that recognizes what those of us who work in this field have long known: that the people who tend rangelands are essential stewards of our environment, our food system, and our cultural heritage. In Hawai‘i, the legacy of the paniolo — rooted in a tradition of hard work, responsibility to the land, and deep connection to place — embodies exactly the values this international recognition seeks to elevate.

I urge the Committees to support HCR31. It affirms that Hawai‘i’s rangelands and the people who manage them matter.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration,

Carolyn Auwelo

Owner/Manager, ‘Āina Advocates LLC

Founder and Director, Hawaii Range Camp

KAPĀPALA RANCH

98-1900 Hawaii Belt Rd

Pahala, HI 96777

lanipetrie@aol.com; kapapala.ranch@aol.com

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair

Senator Lorraine Inouye, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

HCR31

April 17, 2026, 3:01 pm

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

I **strongly support HCR31** which urges the State to consider the importance of rangelands and pastoralists and adopt policies that further sustain rangeland health and pastoralists livelihoods.

Supporting rangeland stewardship keeps lands healthy and productive, stewarded by our ranching community. These lands not only provide food, but grazing reduces fuel loads that mitigate wildfires. As we have witnessed on Maui these fire have destroyed entire communities. Ranchers make large investments in water resources that are relied upon more and more by Federal, State, and County fire crews

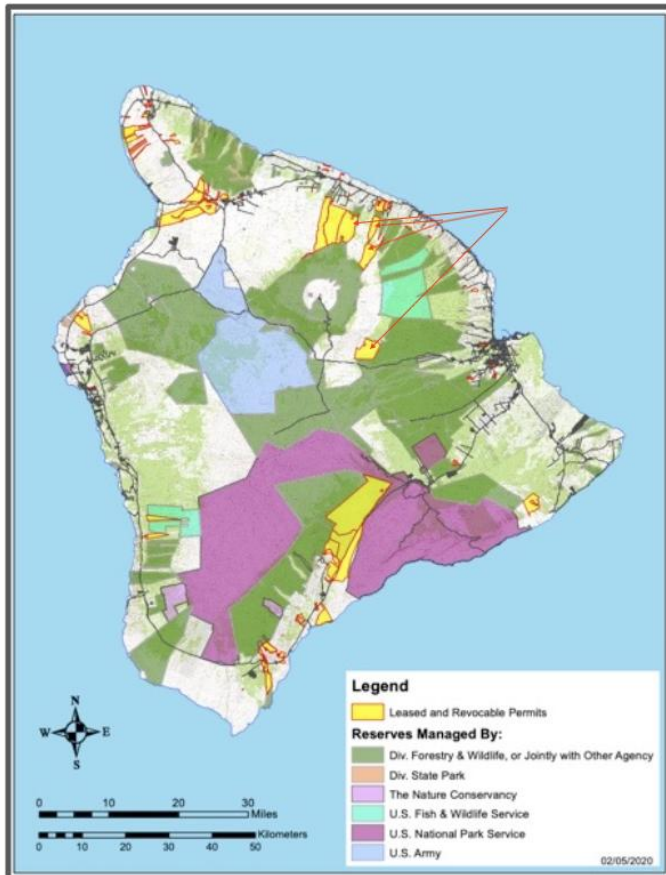
Healthy rangelands are sequestering carbon equal or greater than forests and storing it underground where it remains stable.

In the attached map please notice that the lands in yellow are all that is remaining of State pastoral leases. These lands are still being battled for today for the purpose of reforestation.

Lani C. Petrie
Managing Partner
Kapāpala Ranch



Hawaii Island Land Zones



CONTENTS



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e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

April 17, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON HCR 31
RECOGNIZING 2026 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND
PASTORALISTS IN HAWAII

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
3:01 AM

Aloha Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice-Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HCR 31, which recognizes 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in Hawai'i.

Rangelands play a critical role in Hawai'i's agricultural landscape, supporting livestock production, watershed health, soil stability, and open space across the State. As noted in the resolution, over one million acres of Hawai'i's land are classified as rangelands, reflecting their significance to both our economy and environment.

Hawai'i's ranchers are stewards of these lands, managing over 750,000 acres of rangelands while contributing to local food production and the State's rural economy. Their work supports not only livestock production, but also the preservation of open space, protection of natural resources, and continuation of Hawai'i's paniolo heritage.

HFB appreciates that this measure recognizes the important connection between working lands, environmental stewardship, and cultural traditions. Rangelands provide a wide range of benefits, including water resource protection, biodiversity, carbon storage, and wildfire risk management, all of which are increasingly important for Hawai'i's long-term resilience.

We also support the resolution's encouragement of education, research, and outreach related to rangeland management. Continued collaboration between state agencies, the University of Hawai'i, and the agricultural community will be important to ensure that these lands remain productive and sustainable for future generations.

HCR 31 appropriately recognizes the contributions of ranchers and pastoralists in Hawai'i and aligns the State with the global recognition of their role in sustaining rangeland ecosystems.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of these measures.

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS
Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

HCR 31: RECOGNIZING 2026 AS INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS IN HAWAII.

Aloha Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the Both Committees,

I am writing in **strong support of HCR31** to recognize 2026 as the International Year of the Rangelands and Pastoralists, highlighting the vital role of Hawaii's ranching and livestock community. The resolution celebrates the paniolo culture and its multi-generational commitment to land stewardship, animal welfare, and the production of high-quality local proteins that feed our community.

Hawaii's ranchers manage about 20% of the state's land, and in doing so, this stewardship provides essential ecosystem services such as wildfire fuel reduction, invasive species control, improved groundwater filtration and pass through benefits that build long-term soil health. Grasses bank carbon Without question; the downstream protective effects are far reaching and protect various ecosystems from ridge-to-reef.

Grasses and rangelands act as resilient, highly effective natural carbon sinks by storing carbon deep within their extensive root systems and soil. Unlike forests, these ecosystems offer more reliable long-term storage because they are better equipped to withstand wildfires and drought. By sequestering carbon annually, healthy native grasses and pastures also contribute significantly to improved soil health.

Cattle grazing, specifically managed rotational grazing, further enhances this process by stimulating root growth, recycling nutrients, and depositing carbon in soil at levels exceeding 1000+ pounds of carbon, per acre, per year. Increased carbon storage in soil directly improves soil water holding capacity helping make our community more drought resilient, boosting overall forage biodiversity and helping mitigate spread of invasive weeds. A triple win!

The benefits are too important not to share. For many years through hands-on learning opportunities, I have engaged high school students across Maui County regarding best management practices for sustainable ranching and conservation outcomes via forage production and range management workshops (see images at right). Maui County Farm Bureau's annual Agriculture in the Classroom program helps expose more than 1,200 second graders to agriculture and conservation efforts via classroom activities and a 'boots on the ground' field trip to local ranches. By passing this measure, the legislature will build on our 20+ years of outreach efforts with stakeholders, through formally acknowledging the critical link between well-managed rangelands and Hawaii's long-term food security and environmental resilience.



Mahalo for your consideration of this testimony, and for supporting agriculture in Hawaii!

Kyle Caires, Ph. D.
CAIRES FARMS, LLC

HCR-31

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 12:55:24 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/17/2026 3:01:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jimmy Gomes | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in support of this bill.

HCR-31

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 5:29:05 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/17/2026 3:01:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Woody Child | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I Strongly Support HCR31.

HCR-31

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 12:35:30 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/17/2026 3:01:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jason Moniz | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

My family and I have been dedicated stewards of Hawaii range lands for the past 36 years. We are 4th and 5th generation Agriculturist, and we strongly support HCR31 which recognizes 2026 as the International Year of the Rangelands and Pastoralists in Hawaii.

We appreciate your continued support for rangeland stewardship and the recognition of the the important contributions our ranchers make to supporting food production, to land stewardship, and our paniolo culture. Our successes would not be achievable without your continued legislative support.

HCR-31

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 4:21:50 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/17/2026 3:01:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Theresa M Thompson | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I strongly support HCR 31 RECOGNIZING 2026 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS IN HAWAII.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

Kula, Maui

HCR-31

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 8:58:54 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/17/2026 3:01:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Mark Fox | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I strongly support HCR31/HR31 recognizing 2026 as the International Year of the Rangelands and Pastoralists in Hawai'i. Hawai'i ranchers and their well-managed rangelands contribute to local food security, a healthy economy, watershed protection, fresh water recharge, flood mitigation, invasive species prevention and control, and wildfire prevention and mitigation. Generations of ranchers have been and continue to be steadfast stewards of Hawai'i lands. In addition to managing rangelands for livestock production, many ranchers steward other natural areas and native habitats, plants and animals found nowhere else on Earth. Thank you for recognizing their critical contributions to our collective wellbeing.

HCR-31

Submitted on: 4/16/2026 9:00:37 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/17/2026 3:01:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Kristina Lyons | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

HCR 31

RECOGNIZING 2026 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS IN HAWAII.

April 17, 2026, 3:01pm Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Aloha Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the

I strongly support HCR31 which recognizes 2026 as the International Year of the Rangelands and Pastoralists in Hawaii.

Recognizing the importance of rangeland stewardship and uplifting the role of ranchers means we are supporting food production, land stewardship, and the paniolo culture. Here in Hawai'i, ranchers are the stewards of almost 750 thousand acres of land, or nearly 20% of the State's total land mass. There are many benefits of well-managed rangelands – fire fuel reduction, invasive species control, increased groundwater filtration, improved soil and carbon sequestration, and ultimately, the production of a high-quality protein for our community. Throughout these systems, the boots on the ground that manage them across many generations include paniolo of all ages and backgrounds. They all hold similar high-priority values – love of the land, responsibility to the animals and families they serve, and hard work.

The benefits of rangelands and ranchers are being recognized across the globe. As we celebrate the International Year of the Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) in 2026, we highlight the role that these systems play in food security, land stewardship, and community resilience across the world. Management may look different in different regions, but the same principles apply in caring for the land and the animals. Currently 102 countries support the IYRP. This is an

opportunity to learn across regions, share challenges and successes, and uplift the next generation who seeks to contribute to utilizing livestock to manage land.

We ask that the legislature assist us in continuing to celebrate the positive role of rangelands by passing this resolution to recognize the International Year of the Rangelands and Pastoralists. More info can be found at <https://iyrp.info> We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kristina Lyons